

Missouri's Dental Hygiene Workforce- 2014

Dental hygiene is the science and practice of the recognition, treatment, and prevention of oral diseases.¹ Dental hygienists primarily remove calcified deposits from above and below the gumline, examine patients for signs of oral diseases, and provide other forms of preventive dental care while working in a complementary partnership with dentists.² In Missouri, dental hygienists receive licensure through the Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions, and Professional Registration, Dental Board. As a part of the licensing process, licensees are required to provide the general demographic information from which this analysis is based. Information on licensees is current as of 1/29/2014 and was obtained through the publicly reported records of the Dental Board.

Overall

There are 3,707 hygienists licensed by the State of Missouri. Of these, 2,837 listed a current address located in Missouri. The most frequently listed out of state contact addresses were in Kansas (350) and Illinois (303). By utilizing the 2013 U.S. Census Bureau population estimate and an assumed rate of 1 FTE per hygienist, Missouri has a total of 1 hygienist per 2,130 residents.³

Geographic Distribution

Current locations of hygienists in Missouri can be seen in Figure 1. The county with the most hygienists is St. Louis County (637). Areas of Missouri classified as urban contain 2,143 hygienists (75.5% of total) while those areas classified as rural contain 694 hygienists (24.5% of total). The urban ratio of hygienists to population is 1:1,770, while the rural ratio is 1:3,213. A total of 11 counties, all rural, currently have no dental hygiene licensees. (Urban /rural is defined as established by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services).⁴

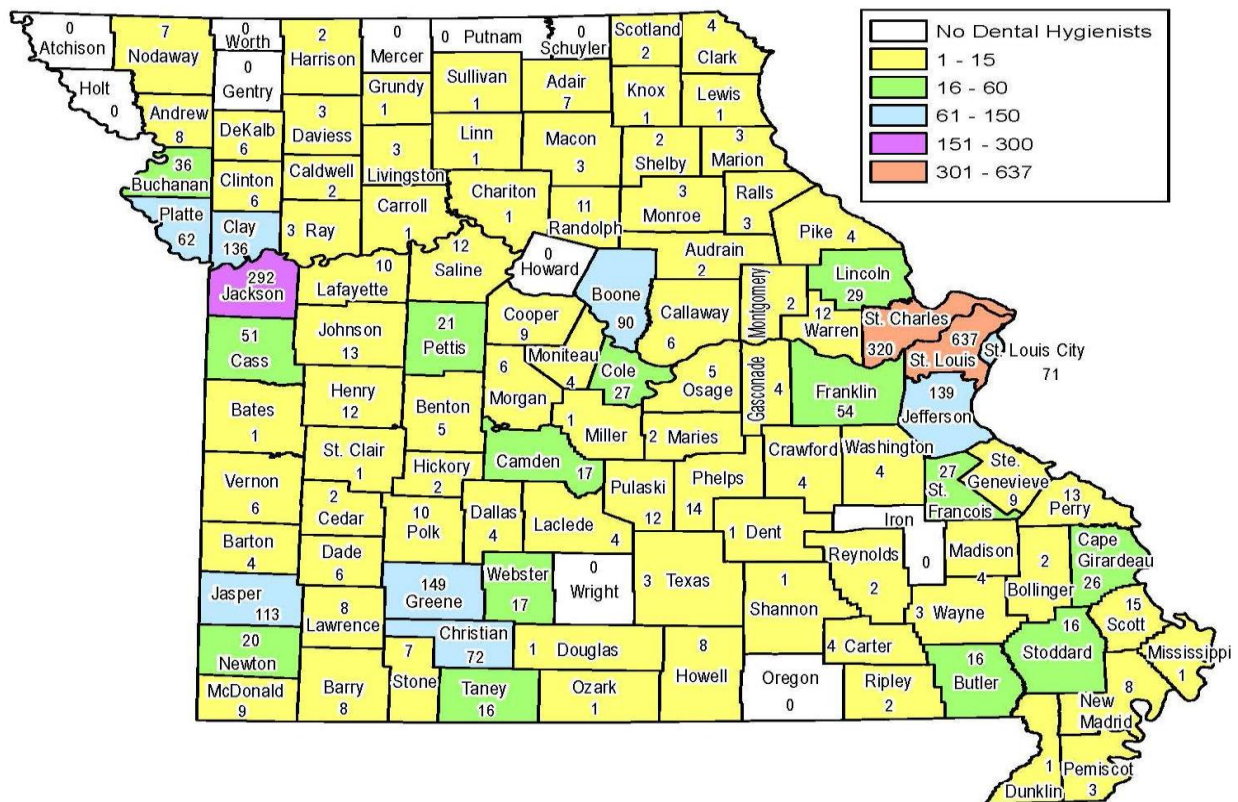


Figure 1.

¹ American Dental Hygienists' Association, *Standards for Clinical Dental Hygiene Practice*, March 10, 2008.

² Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2014-15 Edition*, *Dental Hygienists*. Accessed January 31, 2014 at <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-hygienists.htm>.

³ U.S. Census Bureau, *State and County Quick Facts*. Accessed February 13, 2014 at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/29000.html>

⁴ Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, *Health in Rural Missouri*. Accessed February 14, 2014 at <http://health.mo.gov/living/families/ruralhealth/pdf/biennial2013.pdf>.

Expansion of the Profession

The expansion of the dental hygiene profession within Missouri is demonstrated by two factors: the annual number of new licensees and the overall number of licensees in a year. In calendar year 2003 there were 119 new dental hygiene licenses given by Missouri; in calendar year 2013 this number had well over doubled to 264 (Figure 2). Correspondingly, in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2003 Missouri licensed a total of 2,499 hygienists, a number which has increased nearly 50% by SFY 2013 to a record 3,606 licensees (Figure 3).

Figure 2. Number of Total Dental Hygiene Licensees by Fiscal Year⁵

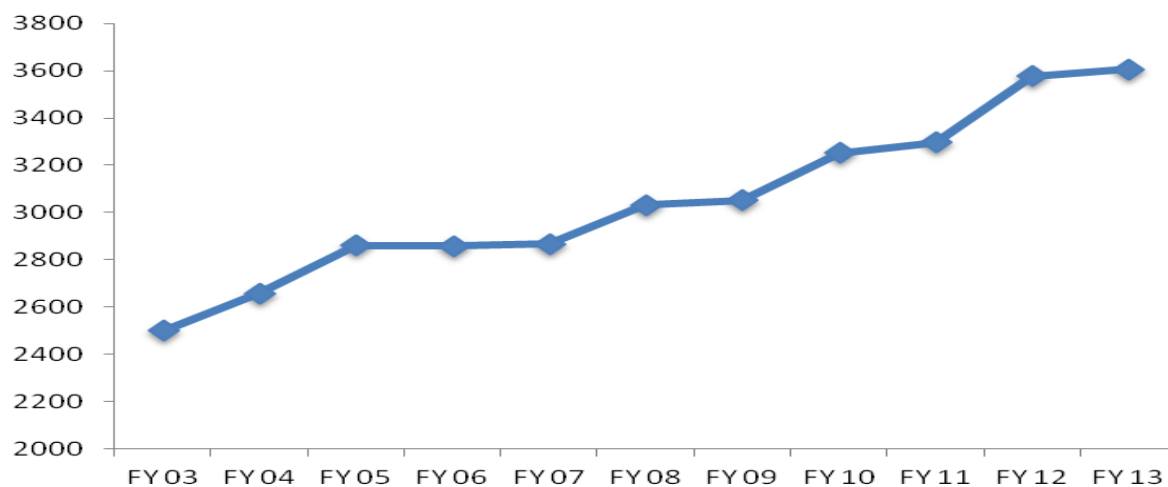
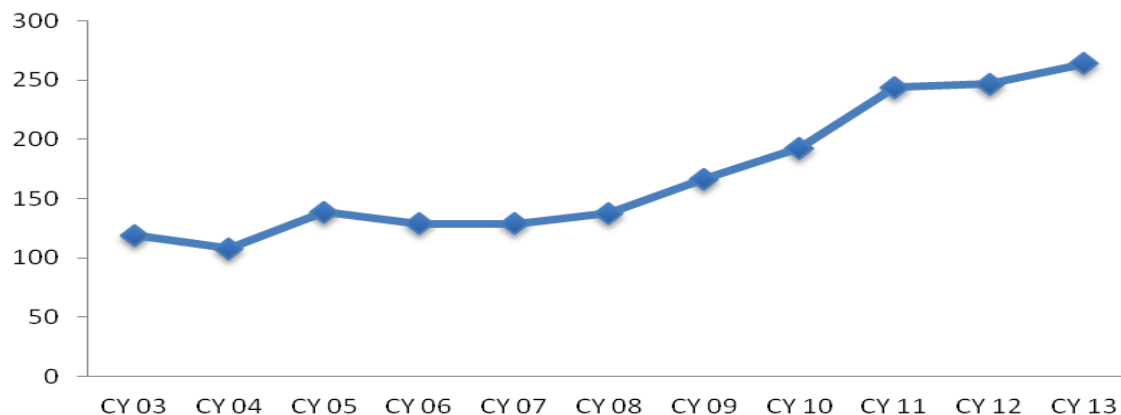


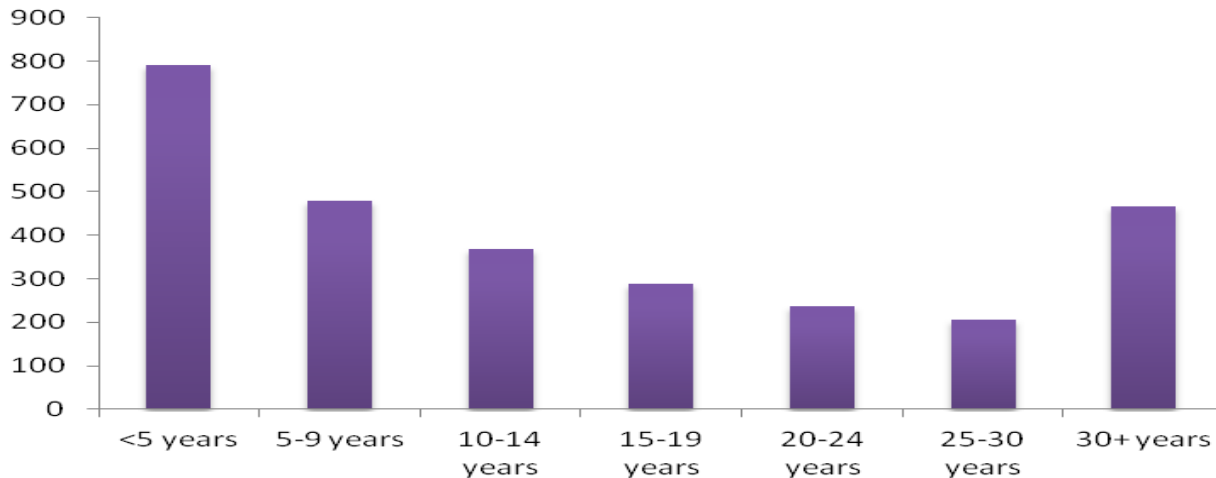
Figure 3. Number of New Dental Hygiene Licensees by Calendar Year⁵



Looking at the number of years of licensure in Missouri shows a fairly linear decrease in total licensees as the number of years of licensure increases, with the most pronounced decrease in total licensees occurring between the <5 years and 5-9 years groups (Figure 4).

⁵ Brian Barnett, Missouri Dental Board, personal communication, January 30, 2014.

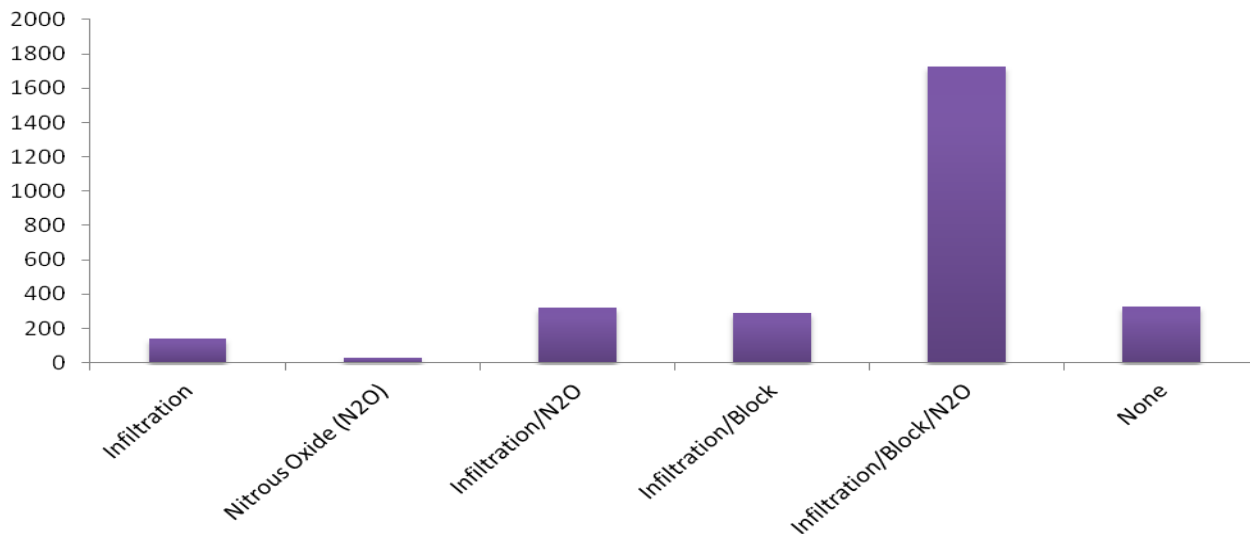
Figure 4. Total Years of Experience of Current Dental Hygiene Licensees in Missouri



Permits

Of the varying types of permits that a hygienist can obtain in Missouri, infiltration anesthesia, block anesthesia, and nitrous oxide (N2O), 88.5% have obtained either one or a combination of multiple permits (Figure 5). The most widely held permit is for infiltration/block/N2O (68.8% of total permits).

Figure 5. Dental Hygiene Permits



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